

# Post-Disaster Fraud Awareness



**P**eople displaced from their homes by wildfires can fall victim to consumer fraud as well.

During natural disasters, deceitful merchants may charge excessive prices for essential consumer goods and services. Price gouging is a crime during a state emergency.

This law applies to vendors of food, building materials, emergency supplies, medical supplies, gasoline, transportation, hotel accommodations, rental housing and similar resources.

While some costs may naturally rise because of increased demand, state law generally prohibits charging more than 10 percent above the price of an item before an emergency declaration.

Those convicted of price gouging could face up to one year in county jail and a \$10,000 fine.

## Helpful Tips

- Be aware of changes in price for goods and services.
- Save receipts, if you suspect purchase prices were inflated.
- Report suspected price gouging to the District Attorney's Consumer Protection Division at **(213) 257-2450**.

To learn about other frauds, visit [da.lacounty.gov/community/fraud-alerts](http://da.lacounty.gov/community/fraud-alerts)



IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU  
KNOW HAS BEEN THE  
VICTIM OF A SCAM, PLEASE  
CONTACT YOUR LOCAL LAW  
ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.



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